



Text File

Introduced: 3/27/2018

Bill No: 2018-0323, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

WHEREAS, Rich Johnston's pursuit of justice and equality started when he enlisted in the United States military as a Marine; and,

WHEREAS, Rich served his country honorably, he returned home and found gainful employment as a janitor working at the USX building headquarters of U.S. Steel in 1981 making Rich a member of SEIU Local 29; and,

WHEREAS, in 1985 a movement swept the nation when unscrupulous building owners tossed out hardworking union janitors and hired non-union janitors and Rich and hundreds of Pittsburgh Janitors endured an 18-month lockout where they braved cold winter nights, and hot summer days in their pursuit for justice; and,

WHEREAS, the Service Employees International Union dispatched all of its resources to Pittsburgh to wage a battle against these wealthy building owners leading to strategies and organizing tactics that included protests that now serve as the basis of SEIU's organizational campaigns that have helped organize a million workers into good family-sustaining union jobs over the years; and,

WHEREAS, this movement sparked what is now known as Justice for Janitors, a day which is recognized every June 15 across the country and their courageous battle sparked similar movements in Los Angeles, Denver and Washington, DC; and,

WHEREAS, Rich's passion and fight for workers to earn a living wage did not stop in Pittsburgh, but took him to campaigns and strikes in Chicago, Houston, Indianapolis, Columbus and Cincinnati; and,

WHEREAS, he worked tirelessly to get lawmakers into office that support working families on the local, state and federal level; and,

WHEREAS, every crusader needs a life partner by his side, it was as a union volunteer in the 2000 Presidential election Rich met his future bride. He took a break in the fight for justice, not once but twice to marry his lovely wife, Pamela Rahl Johnston, who fights by his side bettering the lives of Pittsburghers; and,

WHEREAS, Rich has never turned away from a fight, he is credited for being ingenious in constructing materials, banners, props and new methods of protest to garner attention to the struggles of working people in their efforts to have a better life; and,

WHEREAS, for 37 years Rich generously shared his knowledge from the years as a shop steward, organizer and field representative with new members to the union; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh recognizes Rich for

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helping thousands get good union jobs in various industries from commercial office cleaners, security officers, food service workers, and school employees throughout Pittsburgh; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby declare Tuesday, March 27th, 2018, to be “**Rich Johnston Day**” in the City of Pittsburgh.